Express Yourself!
Milk Expression, Breast Milk Storage, and Bottle Feeding

As a breastfeeding mother, you may sometimes need to remove milk from your breasts. Milk expression may be necessary if…

- Your baby is unable to breastfeed directly
- You will be away from your baby for one or more feedings
- You want to make more milk
- You need to relieve fullness in your breasts

You can remove milk with your hands or with a breast pump.

Removing Breast Milk By Hand

- Removing milk by hand is convenient and doesn't require any special equipment. You may need to practice with different hand positions until you find what works for you.
- Begin by applying warm cloths and gently massaging your breast. Start at the outside, moving from the chest toward the nipple in a circular motion.
- Use your thumb and fingers to form a “C” at the outer edge of the areola, the darker skin around your nipple.
- PRESS…COMPRESS…RELAX
  - Press back towards your chest.
  - Compress your breast by gently bringing your index finger and thumb together, taking care not to pinch your nipple.
  - Relax the pressure and start over again.
- Move your fingers around to get milk from each area of your breast.
- Switch breasts every few minutes to get more milk.

Using a Breast Pump

Breast Pumps

It is important to choose a pump that meets your needs. A manual or single electric breast pump is good if you only pump once in a while. A double electric pump allows you to express both breasts at the same time and is best if you pump often.

Ask your WIC Nutritionist or Breastfeeding Peer Counselor to help find the right pump for you, and ask her for any help you need in using your pump.

Collecting and Storing Breast Milk

Follow these suggestions when collecting and storing milk for a healthy, full term infant.

- Wash your hands.
- Use a clean pump. Wash your pumping equipment with soap and water and let it air dry after each use.
- Express milk from both breasts.
- While away from your baby try to pump about the same time that your baby would eat.
- While at home with your baby, try pumping after feedings. This will help to build a supply of pumped breast milk.
- Store breast milk in clean glass or hard plastic bottles or in breast milk collection bags.
  - Place a single serving in each container.
  - If freezing, leave a space at the top of the bottle or bag because the milk will expand.
  - Label the container with the date the milk was expressed.
- Choose a quiet, comfortable place.
- Apply warm, moist washcloths on your breasts.
- Think about your baby. Look at a picture or smell something he has worn.
- Turn on relaxing music or listen to a recording of your baby’s voice.
It is best to refrigerate your breast milk quickly after pumping and use it in the next day or so. However, there may be times you may not be able to refrigerate or use your milk right away. Follow the guidelines below for storing your breast milk.

### Guide to Storing Fresh Breast Milk for Use with Healthy Full-Term Infants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>How Long?</th>
<th>Things to Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countertop</td>
<td>Room Temperature (60°F-85°F)</td>
<td>3-4 hours optimal 6-8 hours acceptable under very clean conditions</td>
<td>Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>39°F or colder</td>
<td>3 days optimal 5-8 days acceptable under very clean conditions</td>
<td>Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freezer (Separate door from refrigerator or a deep freezer)</td>
<td>0°F or colder</td>
<td>6 months optimal 12 months acceptable</td>
<td>Store milk toward the back of the freezer where the temperature is coldest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Thawing Breast Milk

To thaw frozen breast milk, place the unopened container in the refrigerator overnight or hold the container under warm running water until the milk is thawed.

Never thaw or warm breast milk in a microwave oven. Microwaving can destroy live cells and creates hot spots that could burn your baby’s mouth.

Store thawed breast milk in the refrigerator and use within 24 hours. Do not re-freeze.

### Giving Your Baby A Bottle

Many mothers combine breastfeeding and bottle feeding when they return to work or school, or need to be away from their baby for other reasons.

Wait a few weeks after baby is born before introducing a bottle. Waiting helps your baby get used to breastfeeding as the normal feeding method, and reduces the chance that your baby will prefer the bottle. You may need to try different nipple shapes and sizes until you find one that your baby will like.

Similar to how your baby takes breaks when breastfeeding, she can do that with bottle feeding too. Pausing gives baby more control of the feeding. You may need to hold your baby in a position different than you use for breastfeeding. You may find that your baby will take a bottle better if someone other than you offers it.

Your baby may take short breaks while drinking from the bottle. If your baby takes a break over an hour, throw away the milk left in the bottle.

Ask your WIC nutritionist or Peer Counselor how to make bottle feeding easier for your baby.